

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

NEAE-00 /032 W

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P 141431Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 046

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 7002

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CASC, US, SY

SUBJECT: RABBI GOLDRICH

REF: STATE 253745

1. BELIEVE RABBI GOLDRICH AND HIS ASSOCIATES NEED NO PARTICULAR USG ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO THEIR PROPOSED VISIT TO SYRIA. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENTER SYRIA, TRAVEL FREELY IN COUNTRY, AND MAKE LOW-KEY CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF DAMASCUS AND ALEPPO JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SAME MANNER AS OTHER AMERICAN JEWISH VISITORS HAVE IN PAST. ASSUME THEY WILL BE APPLYING FOR VISAS IN NORMAL MANNER THROUGH SYRIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

2. WE AGREE THAT ANY VISIT WHICH APPEARS TO SYRIANS TO BE PUBLIC RELATIONS OR POLITICALLY ORIENTED COULD MAKE FUTURE CONTACTS AND VISITS CONCERNING SYRIAN JEWRY MORE DIFFICULT. WE WOULD ADD THAT VISIT AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME MAY FACE SEVERAL ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES, FIRST BEING THAT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD GROUP WILL BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN HOTEL SPACE IN DAMASCUS. IN ADDITION, OWING TO LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANESE CRISIS, SYRIAN INTERNAL SECURITY MEASURES AND INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN STEPPED UP. AS A RESULT, SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, ALONG WITH SYRIAN POPULACE IN GENERAL, IS LIKELY TO BE PARTICULARLY

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CAUTIOUS ABOUT WHOM THEY ARE SEEN WITH AND WHAT THEY SAY.

FYI. IF RABBI GOLDRICH DOES VISIT SYRIA, WE EXPECT THAT SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS THEMSELVES WILL ADVISE HIM REGARDING HIS CONTACTS WITH COMMUNITY AT LARGE. HOW HE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY INDIVIDUAL JEWISH FAMILIES WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON THESE LEADERS' VIEWS. END FYI.

3. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING DATES OF RABBI GOLDRICH'S PROPOSED TRAVEL, IF HE COMES, AND NAMES OF HIS ASSOCIATES.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JEWS, VISITS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC07002
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760386-0584
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761054/aaaabumu.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 253745
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RABBI GOLDRICH
TAGS: PINT, CASC, US, SY, (GOLDRICH, STEPHEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006